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ABSTRACT

In the last few years government agencies have expanded their controls over higher education and thus diminished the autonomy of public insitutions. Some of the recent instances of government intervention were the responses of legislators and government officials to student and faculty behavior they considered irresponsible and disruptive. In other cases, financial stringency and mounting costs have provoked greater controls, indicative of long-range trends in government and public administration. In any event, educational institutions have found themselves accountable in manifold ways to the agencies of state government. As private colleges and universities secure state support, they too will find themselves publicly accountable. And as federal support of higher education grows, both public and private institutions will find themselves increasingly accountable to the federal departments that administer the funds as well as to the state agencies through which they are channeled. (HS)

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ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTONOMY

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ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUTONOMY

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Turmoil and disruption on the campuses; political action by students and faculty members; severe shrinkages in governmental, corporate, and individual incomes, coupled with rising taxes; and mounting distrust of higher education by the public are behind the increasing demand for colleges and universities to justify what they are doing and to disclose the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations. Perhaps as never before, institutions, administrators, faculty members, and even students find themselves accountable to a wide range of both internal and external agencies. Institutions and faculties, much to their concern and distress, have discovered that their autonomy is by no means absolute, and that in fact it is often highly vulnerable.

An individual loses autonomy to the extent to which he is answerable to an external agent. Likewise, a university faculty cannot be completely autonomous if it is accountable to administrators or trustees. The corporate university is not completely independent if it is answerable to donors, the legislature, or the electorate. We may then ask, to whom are the institution and its constituents responsible, and for what are they accountable?

GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION

Legislative Controls

Public institutions, obviously, are accountable for their expenditure of appropriated funds. Even constitutionally autonomous universities are subject to governmental post-audit, but this is not the only check on their

expenditures. Since they must return to the legislature annually or biennially for their support, they become in fact accountable for the use of their appropriations. If support requested for a particular purpose is diverted to other purposes--and these uses happen to be matters of particular interest to the legislature--the institutions will have to be prepared to justify their reallocation of resources. I suspect that a study would show that it has become increasingly common, too, for legislatures to attach riders to appropriation bills, even for constitutionally autonomous institutions, mandating expenditures for particular purposes.

Fiscal regulation is not the only means by which legislatures strike at institutional autonomy. A survey of recent threats to institutional independence and to faculty autonomy by O'Neil turned up such other kinds of interference as these:

Shortly after the Kent State killings, the lower house of the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation under which the arrest of a faculty member initiates a complex course of hearings. If a criminal conviction ensues, dismissal is automatic without any further University proceedings. In another instance, the Pennsylvania legislature enacted a statute which required colleges and universities throughout the country to report certain criminal convictions or disciplinary actions against Pennsylvania students resulting from campus offenses. The refusal of an institution to agree in advance to report such information would render it and its students ineligible to receive Pennsylvania state loans and scholarships.

In still another case, the Michigan legislature attached a resolution to the 1970-71 appropriation bill which stipulated that faculty members at the University of Michigan, Michigan State, and Wayne State should teach 10 classroom hours each; those in four-year colleges 12, and those in community colleges 15. The resolution provided that those who teach less than the required load should have their salaries reduced proportionately. In 1969, the California legislature passed a concurrent resolution urging certain regulations concerning probation and tenure on public institutions. In his State of the State message in January 1971, Governor Reagan went further. He advocated the abolition of faculty tenure, saying:

> The original and legitimate reasons for tenure no longer exist. Tenure has become a haven for the incompetent teacher. It should be altered to include a system of merit pay which provides real incentives for quality teaching. This should not be precipitous; a judicious, sensible phase-out would be a real service to all concerned--the students, the public and the teaching profession.

A summary by the National Association of Universities and Land-Grant Colleges of restrictive legislation passed in 1970 covered acts providing penalties for disturbances or interference with university functions, including revocation of financial aid to students and salaries of faculty or staff members convicted of charges of disruption; establishing special procedures for suspension or dismissal of students, faculty, or staff for certain offenses; and requiring institutions to establish regulations governing campus conduct and sanctions for violation of these rules. Commenting on such legislative erosions of academic autonomy during 1970, O'Neil concluded

that "these intrusions have clear and dangerous implications for faculty autonomy as well as institutional independence."[1]

Control by the Executive Branch

Executive branches of government also often exercise onerous controls over academic institutions. Reporting in 1959, the Committee on Government and Higher Education concluded that:

> . . . in some states, college and university expenditures are subjected to close supervision by various state officials . . . leading in many instances to administrative limitations which amount to a usurpation of the responsibility of university governing boards. . . . Beyond question, centralized budget-making is the most powerful of the devices created as instruments of central control. With the development of the executive budget, the judgments of the state budget agency may have a decisive effect upon the decisions of the Governor and the legislature on appropriations for higher education.[2]

I believe that a new investigation would show that state budget departments have steadily increased their control over the operations of public institutions during the last decade, and that constitutionally autonomous institutions have by no means been immune from such fiscal supervision. There is reason to believe that unless this trend is checked--and this is unlikely--state finance departments will greatly expand their control over the fiscal administration of public institutions. Among the factors which may strengthen the hand of these departments are a steady increase

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[1] O'Neil, R. M. The eclipse of faculty autonomy. Paper prepared for a conference on Faculty Members and Campus Governance under the auspices of the Assembly on University Goals and Governance, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, and the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, February 17-18, 1971, mimeographed.

[2] Report of the Committee on Government and Higher Education, *The efficiency of freedom*. Baltimore: Johns-Hopkins Press, 1959. Pp. 9, 11.

in many states in the governor's power to supervise and control all state programs; a tendency to tighten controls over spending and program duplication because of the increasing cost and complexity of higher education; and the development of complex management information systems, cost analyses, and program budgeting, all of which provide instruments of review and control for state finance officers.[3]

The examples given above are only a sample of the methods by which government agencies have expanded their controls over higher education, and thus diminished the autonomy of public institutions. Some of the recent instances of governmental intervention were the responses of legislators and government officials to student and faculty behavior which they considered irresponsible and disruptive. In other cases, financial stringency and mounting costs have provoked greater controls, indicative of long-range trends in government and public administration. In any event, educational institutions have found themselves accountable in manifold ways to the agencies of state government. As private colleges and universities secure state support, they too will find themselves publicly accountable. And as federal support of higher education grows, both public and private institutions will find themselves increasingly accountable to the federal departments which administer the funds as well as to the state agencies through which they are channeled.

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[3]Glenny, L. A. State government and control of higher education. Paper presented to the Symposium on Systems Applications in Higher Education at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, February 7, 1971, mimeographed.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Although the immediate accountability of public institutions is to the lawmakers and public officials who exercise various kinds of control over them, and more directly, to their governing boards, they also are ultimately broadly accountable to the public interest. Stung by the failure of the voters of California to approve a state bond issue providing large sums for the construction of medical school facilities--which ordinarily would evoke strong public support--and by other evidences of widespread public disaffection, President Hitch of the University of California emphasized the ultimate public accountability of the University when he said to the Assembly of the Academic Senate:

> Make no mistake, the University is a public institution, supported by the people through the actions of their elected representatives and executives. They will not allow it to be operated in ways which are excessively at variance with the general public's will. By various pressures and devices the University will be forced to yield and to conform if it gets too far away from what the public expects and wants.

Pressures exerted by special interest groups will shape the functions and services which higher institutions provide. Some of these groups have been much more articulate and influential than others. The University of California, like the land-grant universities of other states, has long responded with alacrity to the needs of agricultural producers. Only recently, however, has the University shown any interest in the farm workers displaced by machines designed by its agricultural engineers. In the past, the public university has responded primarily to the articulate, the influential, and the powerful in the citizenry, but that it has been socially responsive no one could deny. Now, however, the handwriting is clear. The public

university will have to become responsive to a wider range of economic interests, and to a more diverse pattern of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and aspirations. Whether institutions, including their faculties, like it or not, they will find themselves ultimately accountable to all these publics.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE COURTS

Intervention by state legislatures and government officials is not the only form of encroachment from civil authorities. Colleges and universities are increasingly subject to regulation by the courts. Over some period of time, the courts have required institutions to observe fairness and due process in dismissing students, while at the same time holding that colleges and universities have the right to establish regulations necessary for the orderly conduct of academic affairs. Campus disruption, especially after the Cambodian crisis, provoked a wave of judicial intervention. O'Neil has summarized recent court decisions and their bearing on problems of governance, and especially on institutional autonomy. What follows is taken primarily from his reviews.[4]

Recent Examples of Judicial Intervention

Acting in accordance with the resolution of the Academic Senate authorizing each school or college to set its own requirements for course completion after the Cambodian incursion, the Law School of New York University permitted its students to take final examinations or not as

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[4] a) O'Neil, R. M. Judicial overkill. *Change*, September-October, 1970, II, 39-41.

b) O'Neil, R. M. The litigators' response. Address at a conference on Student Protest and the Law, University of Kansas, November 13, 1970, mimeographed.

c) O'Neil, R. M. The eclipse of faculty autonomy, *op. cit.*

they chose, and, if they wished, to receive credit for work done to the point at which formal classes were suspended for the balance of the semester. However, on its own initiative the New York Court of Appeals ruled that students who wished to take the State Bar examination must complete all their courses by regular written tests.

The father of an NYU student successfully petitioned the New York Small Claims Court for a refund in the amount of $277.40, the pro rata share of the student's tuition and fees for the period during which classes had been suspended. (A higher court subsequently reversed this decision.) A group of Queens College students petitioned a court to direct that they be given instruction in several classes that did not meet as scheduled after the Kent State and Cambodian episodes. The Court ordered the college administration to provide special instruction to the individual plaintiffs in the courses which had not regularly met.

On the afternoon of the Kent State shooting, the campus was closed indefinitely by order of the Portage County Court of Common Pleas, which delegated to the Ohio National Guard complete control over access to the campus. The University of Miami, which had voluntarily closed for a short time after the Kent State shooting, was ordered by a Florida State court to reopen. O'Neil commented on these two cases as follows:

> In neither case was the administration even consulted, much less the faculty. The problem is not so much that these decrees were wrong on the merits; one would have to know much more about the facts and circumstances to make that sort of judgment. The fault is that they constituted complete and summary displacement of campus decision-making by external agencies.[5]

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[5]O'Neil, R. M. The eclipse of faculty autonomy, *op. cit.*

A far-reaching decision concerning termination of nontenured faculty appointments occurred in Wisconsin. A nontenured faculty member at one of the state institutions brought suit in the Federal District Court alleging that he had been denied tenure in violation of his constitutional rights solely because he had made public statements critical of the University administration. The judge held that "minimal procedural due process includes a statement of reasons why the University intends not to retain the professor, notice of a hearing at which he may respond to the stated reasons, and a hearing if the professor appears at the right time and place." This decision contravenes the assumption long held by university administrators that a probationary teacher could be denied reappointment without stating the reasons.

Loss of Self-Regulation

Judicial decisions and the presence on campus of the community police, highway patrol, and the National Guard symbolize the fact that colleges and universities have increasingly lost the privilege of self-regulation to the external authority of the police and courts. One must concede that recourse to the police and the courts may on occasion be unavoidable, but I believe that the *general policy* of abdicating internal regulation in favor of external control--and this is the tendency in many places--is unfortunate. Whatever one's views on the matter, it is apparent that colleges and universities have become increasingly accountable to the judicial systems of the community, the state, and the national government.

FACULTY ACCOUNTABILITY

So far, I have emphasized institutional accountability to external agencies, although legislative actions and court decisions have significantly affected the authority of governing boards, faculties, administrators, and students and the internal distribution of power and influence among these constituencies. I now turn especially to the accountability of one of these groups, the faculty.

First of all, of course, a faculty member is accountable to his own conscience, and especially to his own standards of scholarship and intellectual integrity. The faculty member holds himself accountable to his own ideals.

Accountability to Students

Faculty members are also accountable in a variety of ways to their students. Presumably, they are answerable for the effectiveness of their teaching, for fair and unprejudiced evaluation of students' academic accomplishment, and for maintaining freedom of expression in the classroom. But faculty are not only answerable for keeping the classroom intellectually open--there are other elements of responsibility which the teacher must respect at the same time, such as accountability to the canons of scholarship, intellectual integrity, and fundamental educational values. Students are justified in insisting that what they study should be germane to their interests and to the problems of their own time. There is nothing new about this, but to me it does not justify a cult of immediacy. Neither does it justify encouraging students to think that the problems of their

society are capable of simple solution. Faculty members' accountability to students is not merely to their immediate concerns; it is likewise accountability to the necessity for intellectualizing problems without dehumanizing them or blunting their urgency.

Accountability to Administrators

Platt and Parsons[6] found that in institutions strongly oriented to research and intellectual values, the primary mechanism of control is influence rather than power. They also found that under high stress, a collegial, influence-oriented social system tends to regress to relationships of power and to bureaucratic organization and administration. Under disruption and turbulence of the kinds which have plagued higher institutions recently, we may expect administrators and governing boards to assert greater authority over the faculty, and for the faculties consequenctly to become more accountable than before to administrators and to boards of trustees. Let me turn first to administrative authority.

In the University of California, the issue of relationships between faculty and administration, which became acute in the series of student disruptions beginning in 1964, was precipitated most recently by alleged faculty irresponsibility in "reconstituting" the University immediately after the Cambodian invasion. There were widespread reports in the press of politization, improper conduct of courses, abandonment of academic standards, cancellation of class sessions, improper grading, and

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[6]Platt, G. M. & Parsons, T. Decision-making in the academic system: Influence and power exchange, *The state of the university: Authority and change*. Kruytbosch, C. E. & Messinger, S. L. (Eds.). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1970. Pp. 133-180.

widespread student and faculty absenteeism. There were demands in the legislature and in the press to hold the University, its administrators, and its faculties responsible for dereliction of duty and perversion of the educational process.

President Hitch responded to these criticisms in a Memorandum to the Regents, in reply to an earlier resolution directing him to submit plans for maintaining the future academic integrity of the University. The President took the position that the central problem of administrative governance of the University is the relationship between the administration and the faculty. He then observed that over a period of many years, the Academic Senate had moved toward more and more separation between its working committees and the administration--a phenomenon which Mortimer recently documented in his study of faculty government at Berkeley.[7] President Hitch's memorandum called for the restoration of a close working relationship between the faculty Senate and the administration. To that end, he took the position that "it is the administration's responsibility to allocate the resources, and it is a joint responsibility of the administration and the faculty to work out the best means of accomplishing desired educational objectives with the available resources."

Strengthening Administrative Hierarchy

As a means of protecting academic integrity, President Hitch proposed that the department chairman and dean should carry more responsibility in assigning academic personnel, reporting failure of staff members to carry

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[7] Mortimer, K. P. *Academic government at Berkeley: The academic senate*. Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, 1970.

out responsibilities, and recommending appropriate disciplinary action. The intent of this proposal is that there should be more direct lines of administrative responsibility and authority from central administrators to deans to department chairmen. This is exactly what Platt and Parsons predicted would happen under severe organizational stress.

The reassertion of administrative educational responsibility and authority will not be confined to the University of California. For many reasons we may expect faculties to become increasingly accountable to administrators, even in the major institutions in which they have won a high degree of autonomy. The faculties in distinguished institutions are not likely to accept without opposition such strengthening of bureaucratic authority and hierarchy. What Platt and Parsons call "organizational over-emphasis" and the assertion of administrative authority are likely to shatter the delicate balance on which decisionmaking by reciprocal influence depends, and undermine the mutual trust necessary for effective collaboration between faculty members and administrators.

Accountability to Governing Boards

There are signs that governing boards will also demand greater faculty accountability. Platt and Parsons[8] have pointed out that questions of financial and general educational policy ordinarily are formally in the hands of trustees and administrators, although in prestigious institutions the senior faculty are highly influential in these decisions. In matters

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[8]Platt, G. M. & Parsons, T., *op. cit.*

of faculty appointment and promotion, however, the faculty voice in academically distinguished institutions is decisive, even if the final formal approval rests with the president and the governing board. The prerogative of detemining its own membership is one of the faculty's principal claims to professionalism, and it may be expected to resist external interference. This issue has been in contention between the Board of Regents and the Academic Senate of the University of California for many years. In the famous loyalty oath controversy of two decades ago, the Regents finally became less concerned about requiring faculty members to take a non-Communist oath and more determined to assert the Board's authority over the appointment, promotion, and dismissal of members of the faculty.[9] Ultimately, although the Committee on Privilege and Tenure of the Academic Senate found favorably in the cases of nearly all the regular members of the Senate who refused to sign the oath, and in spite of the fact that President Robert Gordon Sproul recommended that those reported favorably by the Committee should be retained, the Regents dismissed 31 nonsigning faculty members. Although the State Supreme Court subsequently struck down the Regents' special anti-Communist oath, the Court failed to pass judgment on tenure rights, faculty self-government, and political tests for faculty appointment, and especially on the faculty's control of its own membership.

Much later, President Clark Kerr persuaded the California Board of Regents to authorize the chancellors of the several campuses of the University to approve appointments and promotions to tenure positions. Within

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[9]Gardner, D. P. *The California oath controversy*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967. P. 143.

three years, due to controversy over the reappointment of Professor Herbert Marcuse at the San Diego campus, the Regents withdrew this authority. The issue of the faculty's control over its own membership thus surfaced again. It is doubtful that the delegation of authority over appointments and promotions will be restored for a long time to come. Again, the Regents have asserted the accountability of the faculty to the governing board.

There is reason to believe that other boards of trustees may reclaim elements of legal authority previously delegated to faculties and administrative officers or entrusted to them by custom and informal understanding. This trend is suggested by the recent statement on "Basic Rights and Responsibilities for College and University Presidents" issued by the Association of State Colleges and Universities. This statement first asserts the ultimate authority of the governing board. It affirms that the many constituencies of an institution--faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents--all should be provided with an opportunity to be informed and heard. The statement goes on to say, however, that:

> . . . legally defined, a college or university does not consist of any one or combination of these constituencies. In the eyes of the law, a college or university is its governing board. . . . Although the president listens to the voices of all constituent groups, it must be recognized that he functions primarily as the administrative arm of the board, and that all legal governing authority resides with the board.

Accountability to Peers

As professionals, faculty members are accountable to their peers. Sometimes they are answerable only informally, as when other scholars appraise their research. Sometimes they are formally accountable, as is

the case when a faculty committee evaluates the individual's performance as a basis for appointment, promotion, tenure, or discontinuance.

Scholars are also accountable to their colleagues for the maintenance of the intellectual freedom of the classroom. On campuses torn by violent student disruption, some faculty members have wavered in their commitment to freedom of teaching, freedom of learning, and freedom of expression on all sides of a disputed issue. They have tolerated disruption of classes, intimidation of professors, and suppression of dissenting voices. Since the acts of a few may endanger the freedom of all, faculty members who fail to support the full freedom of the academy fail their own colleagues. Faculty members are accountable to one another for keeping the university intellectually free.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FREEDOM

Public criticism and pressure from governing boards, and in certain cases self-initiated concern, have persuaded some faculties to define the responsibilities which are correlative with academic freedom and to formulate methods of self-regulation. It is high time. I think it is fair to say that the academic profession has given insufficient attention to means of assuring the professional conduct of its members. It was therefore highly appropriate for the AAUP to issue its statement on "Freedom and Responsibility."[10]

After expressing only general principles, this statement advised that rules governing faculty self-regulation and possible imposition of sanctions should be adopted on each campus in response to local circumstances.

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[10]American Association of University Professors. Freedom and responsibility. Washington, D. C.: AAUP, October 31, 1970.

It is the Association's position that faculties should establish their own norms of professional conduct and recognize their stake in promoting adherence to them. Faculties recently engaged in this process include those at the University of California, the Oregon State system of higher education, the California State Colleges, Stanford University, and the University of Illinois, among others. The code proposed by the Academic Senate of the California State Colleges included, as most of the others also do, sections outlining the responsibilities of a faculty member to his discipline, to his students, to his institution, to his profession, and to the community at large, all of which have been discussed above. The statement is prescriptive, not proscriptive. Its emphasis is positive and constructive, not negative and punitive, but it recognizes that as a last resort, disciplinary action may have to be imposed for flagrant violation of professional standards.

In October 1970, the Oregon State Board of Higher Education issued a statement relating to faculty conduct.[11] This included sections on faculty roles, the regulation of faculty conduct, and faculty discipline. The criticisms of this statement by the Inter-institutional Faculty Senate of the Oregon system of higher education, some of whose recommendations had not been followed by the Board, are indicative of the attitude which faculties are likely to take on questions of faculty responsibility and discipline. The Senate report objected to the inclusion of a list of specific prohibitions on the ground that these were proscriptive regulations which smacked of a

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[11] *Statement by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education relating to faculty conduct and amendments to the Board's administrative code.* Oregon State System of Higher Education, Office of Academic Affairs, October 1, 1970.

"criminal code." More significantly, however, the Oregon Senate took exception to the failure of the Board's statement to relate unacceptable faculty conduct to the faculty's professional responsibilities. The Senate had proposed a draft which recognized that the appointment of an academic staff member might be terminated, or other sanctions might be imposed, for cause. The passage referring to cause was as follows:

> "Cause" shall mean failure to perform the responsibilities of an academic staff member, arising out of his particular assignment, toward his students, toward his academic discipline, toward his colleagues, or toward the institution in its primary educational and scholarly functions and its secondary administrative functions. . . .[12]

Thus, sanctions proposed by the Senate were to be imposed for serious failure to perform stated professional responsibilities.

We may expect faculties to press for control over their own membership, to insist on establishing the norms of professional performance, to judge the performance of their members, and to propose sanctions for violation of professional standards. To this end, we may anticipate that many more professional codes will be formulated and adopted. We may also conclude that faculties will do everything possible to hold administrators and governing boards accountable for recognizing the professional status of college and university teachers. The code proposed jointly by the Committees on Academic Freedom and Senate Policy of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate of the University of California especially emphasized

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[12]Inter-institutional Faculty Senate, Oregon State System of Higher Education. *Report on the 1970 amendments to the administrative code concerning faculty conduct*. October 23, 1970, mimeographed.

the "mutual and interdependent obligations of the faculty member and his institution."

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

So far, in discussing institutional and faculty accountability, I have said very little about the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations. In other words, I have said nothing about the extent to which colleges and universities change their students in demonstrable ways; the relative effectiveness of the means employed to produce these changes, including the differential effects of different institutions; and the cost of whatever educational values may have been added between the time the student entered and the time he left an institution or an educational program. These, however, are the questions with which most current discussions of educational accountability in the lower schools are preoccupied. Finding out how and to what extent students change while they are in college, however, turns out to be inordinately difficult. I shall not take the time to discuss all the complexities here, but mention only some of the more obvious problems in studying college impact.

Problems in Determining "Value Added"

The characteristics of students at a given point in their educational careers are functions of their attributes at an earlier time. The question to be asked, then, is, how has the student changed in relation to his characteristics at the starting point? We now have a great deal of evidence on how students in any one institution vary at entrance, not only in previous academic achievement, but in general and special academic aptitude; intellectual

dispositions such as a theoretical or pragmatic orientation; and interests, attitudes, values, and motivations, to mention only some of the dimensions of personality which are relevant to the educational process. Students in some institutions are relatively homogeneous in such characteristics, while in others they vary greatly. Furthermore, the evidence clearly indicates that colleges and universities are differentially selective with respect to the same characteristics. These attributes not only establish the base lines for determining the amount of change over stated periods, but some of them are indicative of students' openness to change, in other words, their educability.

No single measure of educational outcomes or of student characteristics will suffice to measure effects. In addition to measures of academic achievement such as the Graduate Record Examination, the range of outputs assessed should be as varied as that of the inputs listed above. I should note in passing that although a good deal of progress has been made in measuring intellectual dispositions as well as attitudes and values, the methods by which we attempt to assess these outcomes are for the most part still relatively crude. Nevertheless, there is widespread recognition among persons interested in college impact, accountability, and management information systems that the major problems with which they are concerned demand defensible measures of many aspects of students' performance. Once satisfactory measurements are devised, however, many problems in determining the amount of change still remain; not the least of these are statistical methods for estimating the differences between measures at successive intervals, problems which cannot be discussed here.

Describing College Environments

Studies of impact also require means of measuring, or at least describing, college characteristics, "the prevailing atmosphere, the social and intellectual climate, the style of life of a campus,"[13] as well as "educational treatments." These methods range from the analysis of students' and others' perceptions of general campus atmosphere and campus subcultures to organizational analysis involving faculty values, the distribution of authority, public images, student traditions, student subcultures, curricular patterns, teaching procedures, and learning activities.[14] One of the confounding problems which research workers confront in describing college environments is that student characteristics and institutional qualities are by no means independent. Student attributes are potent determinants of institutional character. Another difficult problem in the analysis of sources of potential influence is that most institutions are not all of a piece. Consequently, the "global environment" may have less effect on particular students than the subcultures of which they are members.

Difficulty of Assessing Impact

But it is in determining the impact of the environment that the greatest difficulties arise. I can mention only some of them. First, environmental variables probably do not act singly, but in combination. Second, changes which occur in students may not be attributable to the effect of the college environment itself. Developmental processes established

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[13] Pace, C. R. When students judge their college. *College Board Review*, Spring 1960, LVIII, 26-28.

[14] Clark, B. R. *The distinctive college: Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore*. Chicago: Aldine, 1970.

early in the individual's experience may continue through the college years. Some of these processes take place normally within a wide range of environmental conditions, and in order to alter the course and extent of development, it would be necessary to introduce fairly great changes in environmental stimulation. Third, changes which occur during the college years may be less the effect of college experience as such than of the general social environment in which the college exists and the students live.[15] In an article with the arresting title, "The Best Colleges Have the Least Effect," the author concludes that the carefully selected students in these institutions develop in accordance with general cultural and genetic forces of the society; the colleges neither hasten nor retard their development, but provide the "womb" in which it can occur. The article also points out that one can often infer college effects by studying the misfits, and even the dropouts, rather than the students who are well suited to the college environment.[16] For these and many other reasons, it is extremely difficult to relate changes in behavior to specific characteristics of the college or to particular patterns of educational activity.

The President of the American College Testing Program recently criticized the accreditation of colleges and universities as being highly subjective, based ordinarily on characteristics of the institution which may have little or no measurable effect on student attainment, and bereft

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[15] Clark, B. R., Heist, P. A., McConnell, T. R., & Trow, M. A. *Student change in selected institutions*. Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, in press.

[16] Chickering, A. W. The best colleges have the least effect. *Saturday Review*, January 16, 1971, 48-50, 54.

of any objective data on changes in students. He predicted that performance contracting of the sort now being tried in such fields as elementary school reading will spread to higher education as a means of assessing its accountability to the taxpaying public.[17] The most enthusiastic proponents of the accountability movement believe that it is possible to assess objectively the effectiveness and also the efficiency of whole school systems, particular schools, individual administrators, and finally, specific teachers. I am not very sanguine about parceling out the contributions to measured pupil performance, and particularly to the subtle outcomes of education, made by teachers, administrators, or school systems. But I am certain that there is no immediate prospect of doing this in colleges and universities, and I suspect that we will not be able to do so for a long time to come.

Be that as it may, the public will press us even more insistently to justify what we do, to show results, and to use resources efficiently. As professionals, we should proceed with all deliberate speed to define standards of performance and to measure our effectiveness against them, for the general public and various constituencies will be pressing their values on us and attempting to hold us accountable in appropriate and inappropriate ways. The forms of accountability which we will undertake and to which we will be subjected will be multiple and sometimes conflicting. There will be inevitable tension between the demands and requirements of accountability and the desire for autonomy. We will be fortunate indeed

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[17] *Activity*. January 1971, IX. Iowa City: American College Testing Program, Inc.

if we manage to reconcile all these forces to the benefit of students, to the requirements of critical scholarship, to the purposes of the university, and to the legitimate public interest.